SAN DIEGO POLLINATOR ALLIANCE

DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

CA NATIVE BEES



Valley Carpenter Bee





California Bumble Bee



Green Sweat Bee



Fairy Bee

VS

HONEY BEES



Western Honey Bee



NATIVE RANGE

- Native to California!
- Have lived here for millions of years

- Native to Europe or Africa
- Introduced to California in the 1850s

SIZE & APPEARANCE

- Huge range in size
- Smaller than honey bee on average
- Wide variety in color, shape, and fuzziness

- Relatively large, worker females average 0.5 in.
- Distinctive black & yellow striped abdomen

NEST & LIFESTYLE

- Mostly solitary nesters, with some exceptions (bumblebees, some sweat bees)
- Females build tunnel nests in the ground, in hollow stems, or in dead wood

- Social nesters that create a wax hive where they live together
- Colonies have a queen, workers, & drones

HONEY PRODUCTION

- Do NOT make honey

- DO make honey

FORAGING & LIFECYCLE

- Co-evolved with California native plants
- Some are specialists and only seek pollen/ nectar from certain plants
- Most collect pollen on their legs or bellies
- Adults emerge seasonally to pollinate, mate, and nest for a short time, then the next generation spends the rest of the year as immature bees in their nests.

- Generalist species: use pollen from many types of plants, but can't pollinate all plants
- Adults forage year-round in warmer areas, like the South Coast Region
- Collect pollen on their hind legs by mixing it with saliva

AGGRESSION

- Very gentle
- Rarely sting
- No documented allergic reaction to sting

- Can display aggression - especially feral honey bees, especially near hives
- Sting when threatened
- Sting can cause allergic reaction